

## HIS SISTER

His oldest sister hid cucumbers  
and shucked-corn under her skirts  
rather than giving him any.  
She gave their mother squash turned soft,  
leathery cobs of corn, and beans  
too full of rust to sell.  
She was a voracious canner.  
When her son brought home  
a baby girl with big floppy ears,  
a baby that was his wife's, not his,  
she grew fangs, and dared  
either of her sisters to approach.  
The brother she accused of cheating  
on their mother's will, and hissed  
a steamy nostril-full of green fire,  
which did little more than singe his ear  
and send him more quickly  
back to California.

-- Robert Peters

Huntington Beach CA

## QUITS

I knew this one  
he'd been famous for decades  
he said  
listen, we'll write letters to each other  
we'll keep carbons and then we'll  
bring out a book of our correspondence

so I said  
all right  
and we began

he was in Greece and I was in East Hollywood

he started writing about his days in Paris and Algiers  
how he had met Burroughs and Ginsberg and Corso  
and Gysin  
there was even something about Picasso

all I could write about was how I lost at the racetrack  
I was due in court for drunk driving  
my woman was leaving me  
the post office was trying to fire me for absenteeism



he wrote that he was supported by a Prince  
and that wasn't the first one  
and how he lived in a thatched hut  
with boys and goats  
under a sometimes active volcano  
he smoked exotic dope night and day  
he spoke seven languages  
he was on speaking terms with major editors & publishers  
they were in England, Italy and America  
he had stayed in that famous Paris hotel  
(his poems had those startling breaking lines  
my lines just went from corner to corner)

he sent a half dozen photos of himself (dated)  
he had been to many brave places  
he was smiling in fur hats  
he had natty open shirts with chains  
he had a drooping intellectual mustache

I wrote back that I had puked that night  
I had mixed vodka with gin  
I wondered if my woman was coming back

I finally gave up on the correspondence  
I told him that I couldn't go on anymore

oh  
he wrote back  
so you quit  
I out-wrote you so you quit  
you didn't want it known that I could out-write you

you are the best  
I wrote back  
you are a Prince

I don't know if I believed that  
he must have  
he never complained about our broken correspondence again.

#### THE BIG BENEFIT READING

I had gotten sucked into reading with this  
group and found out that we were reading

to save some political prisoners in some  
oppressed state

and so when I got up I told them that I  
wasn't reading to save anybody but  
myself.